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Mr. E—— B——'s

A N S W E R

T O

HIS OWN SPEECH,

Of the 11th of FEBRUARY, 1780.

W I T H

Mr. F——'s

A N I M A D V E R S I O N S

T H E R E O N,

Taken in Short-hand, at the C—— Tavern,
in the Strand, February 2d,

And now first Published

By LOVEL TOMLINSON.

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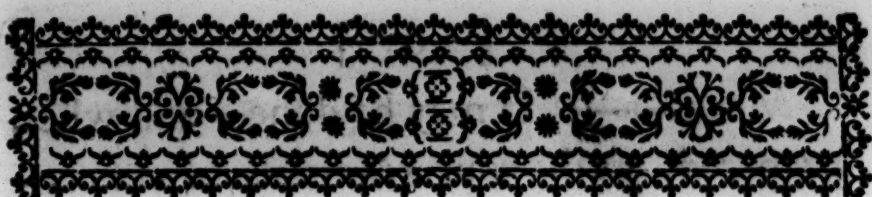


TO THE READER.

*F*atigued with working at Westminster-hall, where I had been taking down the speech of an eminent counsel in short-hand, I was consoling myself with a pipe and sixpenny-worth of punch in a small room in a tavern in the Strand, when, by the perfect manner in which I distinguished the voices and conversation, I found that only a thin wainscot partition separated me from two of the greatest orators and patriots of this nation ;— my pipe being out, and as I always take fortune as well as time by the forelock,—this conversation may pay for my punch, quoth I; and immediately I called for some paper, and set to work in short-hand.

TO THE READER

Having said nothing in my
last, where I had been making
mention of an eminent example in Great-Britain, I
was saying myself with a pipe and a bowl
worth of punch in a family room in a corner
in the Strand, where the perfect manner
in which I distinguished the other and con-
sidered, I found that only a thin window
partition separated me from two of the
greatest authors who have lived in this nation.
My pipe being out, and my bowl full, I
took as well as time for the purpose - this
conversation may pay for my punch, and I
and immediately I said for some papers, and
let us walk in Great-Britain.



Mr. E----- B-----'s ANSWER,
&c.

Mr. B-----.

INDEED, Charles, our Beconsfield excursion was of use; we had the leisure so to mature and digest the plan, that I have no doubt but the delivery will come easy to me—

Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequantur :

But, Sir, lord N— will oppose it,—oppose it, Sir, part by part.

Mr. F—. It matters not if he does; we, on our side, have considered every part *pro* and *con*;—I fear not the being able to support every proposition.

Mr. B—. True, Charles; but have you adverted to a general attack on the purport of the —

Mr. F—. Why who the devil would ever controvert the principle of the bill?

Mr. B——. It may be done—and when prepared, with your readiness of conception, and force of language, you will be surely able to support; but as it is you that I rely on for support, I think, Charles, you should be prepared—to our old stile of exercise—I oppose my own speech—you will answer.

Mr. F——. Address that old chair—stay; I'll set him in the middle of the room.—Egad! it's heavy, and heart of oak; 'twill do for old Norton admirably—there, get on the treasury side—and now begin.

Mr. B——. You must not interrupt me, as in some simple point of argumentative discussion; you must indulge me to the very peroration, if only for practice-sake.

Mr. F——. Do not fear me—proceed.

Mr. BURKE then spoke as follows :

Mr. Speaker,—the honourable gentleman who has so ably arranged, and so eloquently delivered his very complicated plan for the reform of the state, not unnecessarily

cessarily in the opening of his speech, displayed a deep sense of the invidious situation his public spirit subjected him to, not without propriety deprecated that breath of obloquy and resentment, which, from those of needy or ambitious expectancy, might blow full upon him, give his enterprise the taint of malignity, and sully the splendor of his bold and honest undertaking; his undertaking to free the spirit of our old English constitution from the unwieldy lumber of antiquated customs and modern abuses, which oppress and restrain the vigour of its law, freedom and œconomy. If in *these* times he deemed it meet to apologise for *such* a plan, and to excuse himself to the interested and powerful for encroaching on such exorbitancy of their profits and authority, as, nor the resources of the state, nor principles of our government can duly allow; if, under such circumstances, the necessity of a conciliatory exordium was any ways evident, surely under the predicament of opposing so specious, though, I trust, impolitic a scheme, much should be urged

urged in the solicitation of candid hearing, in the beseeching that no premature distrust or disaffection alienate your goodwill and attention, or induce this honourable house to forego their cool and better judgement : it is to their judgement, Sir, that I shall appeal. *I am no orator, as Brutus is* ; I cannot call on your passions for a benevolence to my situation : Is it dangerous ? I am proud of it ;—Is it invidious ? I am not less so. To speak honestly and usefully on this solemn occasion is my sole wish, and I hazard ill-will from my country, freely as I would brave perils for her ;—I self-devote my character, as being to her service ! under the weight of general displeasure. It is that heart-felt sentiment which is the reward of those who act for her honour and interest, that is to repay me for the loss of public estimation :—Is the loss of life a sacrifice ? Indeed, Sir, I feel the temper of the house—I perceive its repugnancy to the admission of such reasoning as may militate against the specious, and (I dare allow) honestly conceived reform, which
too

too hastily it may call the *Panacea* of all those evils which afflict this country. Let me be indulged with a candid hearing, and it shall shortly appear that I am not wont to gloss over evils or abuses of any kind; and I trust that the tenor of my past conversations and avowed principles will stamp me a warm friend to the general liberties of mankind, and to my particular rights as an Englishman; with respect to future conduct — unhappily, the hour of proof may be at no great distance! the honourable gentleman has repeatedly called the attention of the house to the principle of his bill,—*the restriction of that undue influence which raises the crown so high on the self-debasement of parliament.*—It is to the principle of his bills that I shall argue: his means are most ably conceived, and perhaps adequate to the end proposed;—it is to the end that I will argue: will it not entail the worst consequences? This apparent arrangement of order and harmony, will it not be subversive of that very freedom, of that very œconomy it is meant to support or introduce? Sir, I may

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appear

appear paradoxical, but these questions will bear debate ; and ere I set down, I will evince that directly and suddenly to tear away this tree of poisons that has sprouted from the cranies of our state-building will endanger it to its very foundation. The honourable gentleman has somewhere, early in his speech, said, that his sentiments met those of the county petitioners :—I will work at the rude work, ere I touch on the ornamental finishing ; a word to this subject :—I well know, Mr. Speaker, that county meetings have been nearly general ; few provinces have withstood the call of patriotism ; whether its evil spirit fascinates, or true genius engages, I leave to the wordy war of the partizans of either side : I profess to be none. Can these meetings be of salutary tendency, considered in a view relative to the manners of the age, and particular circumstances of this country ? Sir, it is a question of moment to me,—to every Englishman. Let not prejudice or passion drive us to a hasty decision,—let us canvass it with good temper,
fair

fair freedom, and well-weighed thought. Are these meetings or associations to confine themselves to the petitioning parliament? Sir, I appeal to the noble lord in the blue ribbon, whether the fate of such supplications or remonstrances may not be readily anticipated? They will be, or over-ruled, or consigned to forgetfulness or inadvertency on your table, and the effort being considered as the faint and last resource of the friends to the renovation or amendment of the British constitution, the party will respire its last breath into—*the bladder which is to buoy him up on his sea of glory.*

The noble lord nods assent—

“ Vultu quo cœlum, tempestatesque serenat

“ Annuit.”——

'Tis ratified, as had Jove nodded in his Synod! But these associations perhaps have a further view of coercion or force, should entreaty or admonition not avail!—That this nation has progressively attained the heights of refinement in knowledge, and in arts, in speculative sciences, and in

luxurious enjoyments, will readily be acquiesced in;—that a diversity of systematic opinions are the consequence of the one, and a dissension of interested passions the effect of the other, will be as readily allowed: What then can be the result of violent measures at this period but raging discord, and all the horrors of a civil war, without the prospect of our miseries being repaid by ought of salutary or good proceeding therefrom? In an enlightened and vicious age, (and an enlightened is but too generally a vicious one) every history loudly tells us that we are to expect nought from public commotion, but the growth of despotic power, or birth of aristocratic tyranny. Only on great public principles very generally disseminated through the mass of the people, are we to build our hopes of a free state; and the existence of those genuine principles is incompatible with ought of that subserviency to self, which, from the highest to the lowest, has its mark on the spendthrift, the gamester, the avaricious, the profligate, the ambitious, the envious,
and

and various other denominations of character, under which, a doubtless majority of our countrymen may at this moment rank. Lord Bolingbroke, Sir, taxed Sir Robert Walpole with having ruined the morals of the people, whilst merely he had in view to seduce the integrity of their representatives: the allegation was politically just; for venality soon found its course from so high a fount, and covered as a flood the face of the country; —the constituents then crowded to the example, as chusing rather to sell themselves than to be trafficked for by others; and corruption had its market in the retail and in the gross: then fled true liberty from this isle! —It is to the voice of virtue only that she will listen! you call her back in vain, unless with celestial harmony! —Let us begin, by rectifying our morals, by enlarging our minds; let us be wise, let us be virtuous, and we must be free. Are we never then to expect the reformation of government in its œconomy and influences? Are we never to enjoy the spirit as well as form of our constitution?

—I

—I hesitate—I yet see not well my way
 —but assuredly, whenever the regal power
 shall on the self-debasement of parliament
 once again establish the plenitude of prerogative ; whenever the sceptre shall efface the charter of our rights, and becoming a rod of iron in the hands of the monarch, shall enforce the hard virtues of philosophic sufferance, and shall drive to sequestration the proud, and to sudden indigence the sensualist ; then shall men neither be educated with an eye to sensuality, or to pride ; then shall true virtue from parent to son gain repeated vigour, till in the succession shall come that purity of manners as shall fit each individual to gain and sustain a free situation in a free English government ;—a situation which, at this period, few surely are fitted for ! Towards the furtherance of such establishment of our constitution in all its latitude of freedom, perhaps the master-wheel has already been hewn out, that is to set the great engine at work ; I allude to the committees of correspondence ; the precedent will not readily be foregone, and at

some future time it may tend to such co-operation of east, west, north and south, as it may not be easy for a king to temporize with, or safe for him to oppose : For the present, this wheel should rust to its axle, nor precipitate the crude machine to the danger of its yet unseasoned and unbolted timbers. Are we reduced then, Sir, to the sad necessity of a waiting the progressive work of Providence? Are we hopeless of our own days, with our arms before us, idly to set and meditate on the reversionary inheritance of a distant posterity, with a deadly interval of exclusion to ourselves, to our sons, and all those whom the page of life has hitherto unfolded to us as subjects of our blessing and endearment?—I am not, Mr. Speaker, (no more than the honourable gentleman) one of those who would look to time, that physician of brutes, for a medicament of the evils under which we labour ; I too would wish to give a helping hand to the re-establishment, or the perfecting of our much applauded constitution of government ; but the honourable gentleman must
not

not suppose that it is to his plan of reform that I can be assistant. If I mistake not his plan, it is forthwith, and at one blow to destroy that influence of the crown which commands a majority of votes of either house of parliament, to abett the views and system of its administration. The various efficient parts of his plan work well to his grand object, his principle; but, Sir, I deem it not necessary to speak to the efficient parts of his plan, as I rise to oppose its very principle:—I would not have the influence of the crown so suddenly done away,—hastily to destroy what has been so gradually acquired, were to hazard the dissolution of those bands which hold together the king and the people.—I feel how ungracious to the public ear is such an asseveration; but I tread on too sure a ground to be apprehensive of consequences, and have too honest a purpose to have any dread of mere opinion—

“ *Iustum et tenacem propositi virum*

“ — *Nec popularis aura*—

“ — *mente quatit solidâ.*”

Let me suppose the honourable gentleman's

man's plan established in the fullest latitude, his most sanguine and best hopes accomplished, and the independency on the crown of every member of this house ascertained beyond the doubt of the most factious:—this Medean boiling is more likely to dissolve than to renovate the constitution;—the temper of the times will not bear this violence on the public manners and habits;—Sir, this *Platonis Πολιτεία in facie Romuli*, will not, cannot be borne with;—Sir, it is an experiment wild and visionary as that of the hermetic sage, who would effect the transmutation of his mass of lead, by a single drop of the vitrified diamond.—Let me call your attention to a consideration of the subject in this point of view. From that eminence, Sir, of domestic purity and public virtue—

“ —Despicere unde queas alios, passimq; videre
 “ Errare,—atque viampalantes quærere vitæ;”

From that arduous height to which laborious knowledge and persevering integrity have been your guides,—look down

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on

on the face of this island,—you will behold the arts of luxury pushed to the verge of refinement, and an attachment to them pervading every denomination of men, whose means may be adequate to their attainment; attention to acquaintance, to friends, to family, to country, is no longer social, growing from self-love; but pure attention to Self in the making each connection subservient to some view of pleasure or enjoyment to the individual: serious things, holy things, are turned to the same account as the frivolous and fanciful,—the gaming-house, and the senate, the table of festivity, and the sacred one of the church, are all blended lightly together in thought, deed, and discourse: Sir, that honourable gentleman drinks his two bottles, and is a wonderful debater;—that honourable gentleman loves his girl—and his country; that honourable gentleman is extravagantly profligate, and plunged in debt, but has fine talents for finance, and is of unshaken integrity:—Sir, that doctor in the snug wig is one of the jolliest fellows I ever met with, and

Sir, I assure you, could you but hear him officiate at the communion, you would be *charmed*;—'tis a shame he is not a bishop : is this picture beyond the colouring of the times ? Even the softer amiable virtues, which are the peculiar characteristic of an age well enlightened, but yet not wholly corrupt, are scarcely to be found amongst us ; the pure intercourse of familiarity unbiaſſed by worldly motives, is hardly to be found ; ſociety has not any good band of union,—we at beſt are connected but by chaplets and garlands,—a flowry chain, broken and entwined at pleaſure. Doubtleſs, there are exceptions to my deſcription, but the generality of our nobility and gentry are diſtinctly portraited ſomewhere in this gloomy picture ; and though aſſuredly ſome of the pure unexceptionable characters find their way into this houſe, yet, Mr. Speaker, I cannot ſo flatter ourſelves, as not to confeſs, that from the majority comes the majority, and that thoſe men uncontaminated by the vices of the times, few as they are without doors, are yet

fewer in proportion within these walls : I say fewer, Sir ;—the small number of men who are of steady and uniform attachment to the old-fashioned virtues, have rarely an inclination to quit their wholesome retreat for the pestilential air of the political circle.—They fear the infection of those vices and habits which taint the circulation in great cities, and among the higher ranks of men. I have adverted to the motley scene without doors ; within, as much of private vice and profligacy ; in a word, as much of self is introduced, with a whole stock of parliamentary vices crouding too for admittance : there is avidity, there is necessity, there is vanity, and there is ambition ; but, will say the honourable gentleman, I cut off, and root out all these passions by striking at their object : I answer, that an object will still be found whilst such passions are in full force. Our reformer regins at the wrong end,—but of this in its place ; under these restrictions, members of parliament will only drive to their goal with greater art or boldness, by undermining the liberties
of

of the people, or by factious contention with the sovereign :—the one will become a treachery even more welcome than at this day, and the other will yet have sufficient to dispute for, though not enough to satisfy. —Sir, whilst the present system of manners prevails, there is no fear that to retain or to be bought, will lapse into disuse. But the honourable gentleman's plan being assented to, and adopted, let the political eye anticipate the colour of parliamentary proceedings in the more public point of view. Our situation, Sir, as a nation, is in so complicate a state of distress, so many burthensome circumstances to bear up against, so many exigences to provide for, so many resources to be searched out, that not to form some fair good systematic plan of conduct at home and abroad ; or when formed, not to adhere to it, were equal and certain ruin.—But who is to form this plan ? Who have we of such approved weight and authority, as to induce us to confer this weighty trust on him ?—I shall be told that many are to be found. —The honourable gentleman himself, will perhaps

perhaps name the very man :—I would ask him a question equally important, but more difficult to obviate :—how will he ensure, that this heaven-born genius shall have the weight duly to direct the then heterogeneous and uncemented mass of parliament ?—How will he ensure us from a succession of unconnected schemes, and visionary systems, from which nought but shame abroad and confusion at home can be expected ?—The honourable gentleman *could* answer this, but he *will* not ; I am too well acquainted with his powers of mind, not to suppose that he anticipates what I am going to say :—Sir, I will answer, that probably we may be freed from this evil, by (if possible) a greater : on the adoption of the honourable gentleman's plan, some nobleman or commoner of great rank and estimation, may be found to take the lead in public affairs ; and I am not ignorant enough to be persuaded that a crowd of what is called his party will not follow him into office ; a short time will suffice for that great man, and that party to monopolize the small

small residue of profitable annuities which the crown shall have to bestow in the line of sinecure or pension :—Then, Sir, will there indeed be, “ *a long, dull, dreary, “ unvaried vista of exclusion and despair ;* ”—then will opposition lose all vigour and spirit ;—then will gay or sullen inattention give up this now frequented house to solitary gloom :—Forty members, Sir, shall vote away our property ;—forty members shall vote away our rights ;—forty members, Sir, shall call to mind this blow at undue influence ; and forty members, Sir, shall build the king a new and more solid edifice on the old foundation ;—then comes star-chamber free-gifts, and all the retinue of ancient prerogative.—My blood boils at the thought,—the city is inflamed,—the country rises,—parliament, as of old, is dissolved to be recalled, to be dissolved again till all reverts to civil war ;—a civil war of most fatal tendency, as I observed and explained in what I said relative to the county meetings.—But, Sir, this plan not only avails little to our present good, but it shuts out the fair prospect of futurity,—
a prof-

a prospect which now opens to my view—
 “as blooming Eden fair, as heaven sublime!”—wherein I descry the majestic genius of our isle cloathed in the unsully’d garb of purity, supported by wisdom and virtue, and introduced by peace to the fane of liberty!—Sir, I fear I have wearied the patience of the house, whilst I have laboured to reprobate the measures proposed by the honourable gentleman; but it is due to him, it is due to this house; it is justice to myself that I say something further,—and in some degree do away the odium of this opposition to so popular a measure, by giving my own thoughts of the evils of the times, and the proper mode of sound and adequate reform: Indeed, I acknowledge the one, I feel the necessity of the other: I agree in the whole detail of grievance, but I differ as to the mode of redress. That we are at variance with the better part of our empire; that apparently bare of alliance we have powerful compacts and alliances to cope with, that our debt is most heavy and increasing, that our pecuniary

cuniary resources are on the decline, and the demands for them every hour more pressing, the noble lord, and others on the same side of the house cannot but allow ;— they do allow, and they cannot be so blind as not to perceive that œconomy, that parcimony is necessary—as well to their ministerial authority, as to the national welfare ;—an exhausted treasury, Sir, can be no pleasing sight to a first lord of the treasury.—It cannot but be equally evident, that many parts of the old establishment are grown rotten and ruinous, that many offices are but sinecures, and many pensions ill-bestowed ; and it is obvious enough, that such are proper objects of reform ; but I would not strike at so much of them at *once* as should directly tear up root and branch that undue influence of the crown so much complained of ; in this the plan before the house does too much ;—in another and most essential point, too little, or rather nothing. The honourable gentleman has with so much bility and so thorough a knowledge

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of his subject gone through the detail of such excrescencies as might well be lopt from the trunk, as exhausting the sap which should tend to its nutriment and fructification, that I have in that line but the simple choice of what I would begin with, and in what manner I would chuse to proceed.—The first object of curtail, where so much is to be done away, does not at first sight occur to me,—it matters not,—all that I would at present say, is, that I should go tenderly to work ;—progressively proportioning my attempts in this way of reform to the success that shall attend our endeavours in the other line of reform,—a reform of the morals of the people,—of the nation :—making the two keep just and equal pace together, so that by the time the last stroke shall be given to sinecures, to pensions, to all that upholds the undue influence of the crown ; the upper house, this house, the people at large shall be fitted to assume and sustain the respective share of genuine influence, that the spirit of our English constitution portions
out

out and entrusts to each.—Let not this be considered as matter of idle and Utopian speculation ;—I am confident of success if the scheme is pursued with temper and unvaried attention: to digest and carry into execution so complicated and progressive a system of reform, is not the work of one man,—no, not though he be the wisest and best of men.—Many must lend their abilities—and examples too ;—example shall afford a better and more powerful document, than can be enforced by the most salutary regulation :—my unwearied and gratuitous assistance, my weak, but honest labours, are ever ready to answer the call of virtue, of freedom, of my country. Sir, I would not at this late hour too deeply investigate this subject on many accounts—I would not, from a sentiment of how much is due to the abilities and to the industry of the very able mover of the plan now before the house. It were not fair, it were not parliamentary to jostle his racer in the stadia, —it were mean artifice to divide the notice

and blunt the recollection of the audience, by substituting an after-piece to his sublime drama. Let him be supposed to have anticipated all that can be urged in that line of reform;—let me be supposed to glean from his stock,—to make up my sheaf ear by ear,—to tread o'er his field step by step, not hastily nor over officiously: each stalk I gather with my right hand, I strengthen by placing with it another of another quality, which I have ready in my left:—Sir, I advert to a reform of the manners of the people, a reform I mean, should go hand in hand with, and accompany that proposed by the honourable gentleman, in the presumption that his plan is not to be taken in the gross, but in the detail.—With regard to the branch that I would graft on his most fruitful stock, I shall not for the present say more than is necessary to give the house a just idea of the feasibility of what I propose.—Justice to myself demands that I should say something—respect to him that I discourse not much.

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The nice gradations by which men glide from a state of ignorance and rude simplicity to a state of general knowledge and polished dissipation is an object of curious speculation ; but the investigation is by no means a necessary preliminary to such procedure as would bring back a society from a refined intercourse with the vices to the more homely acquaintance with the virtues,—however far it had left them behind in its hasty career. In most disorders of the political body, it is wise to recur to the origin of the malady, and tracing it from its birth to pursue it to the crisis which is the subject of the consultation ;—but the corruption of manners is a general gout throughout the political frame which baffles all systematic reasoning and applications : to leave the trite metaphor of the human body, often applied, and rarely applicable to the political,—I shall plainly deliver my reasons, wherefore the retrospect to the progress of society is an unprofitable and embarrassing study to those engaged in its reform ;—and this I enter on
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the more willingly, as it will be the saving of much trouble both to myself and to others. A nation becomes vicious and enlightened with such equal pace, that it is difficult to distinguish whether the arts have derived their force from the appetites, or the passions and appetites rather gained ground from the subministration of the arts ;—but this we are sure of, that our age is most knowing as well as most dissipated, and that knowledge and dissipation having been reared up together, it were endless and absurd to attempt to retrace the connection between them, so as to point out the evils that accrued from each circumstance of the blended growth, with intent to apply the caustic on one fixed and regulated plan of medicament :—the attempt were an absurdity of the greatest magnitude,—for ye cannot make men less knowing or ingenious ;—or, if ye could, ye would not ; and yet the proper clue will carry ye back to many evils which had their first birth in those chambers of the labyrinth which belong to

knowledge and to art. I think, Sir, without involving ourselves in abstract theories and distant researches, we must be content to take the survey of mankind as they are, and study to meliorate their temper and habits by such alteratives as we are warranted in the use of by good sense and ancient practice.—I would begin with the lower classes—with that mass of the people which as being less impregnate with a just sense of, and feeling for their situation, renders the interposition of their governors the more necessary ;—the traders and those in a middling rank in life I would next take in hand ;—to the depravity of the higher classes I would next and last turn my attention—for I am to hope, enlightened as they are, they shall need little authoritative regulations ;—I am to hope that they will give way to that train of reasoning which the lesson of impending necessity shall inculcate ; and render restrictive and sumptuary laws unnecessary, as perhaps at this crisis they may be inexpedient. Sir, I shall drop a few hints relative to the
reform

reform of the lower classes ; gentlemen of greater parliamentary experience will turn them to account ; I claim the assistance of the house, of no one more than the honourable gentleman,—it would be my glory to be his under-labourer in the vineyard—I am no veteran in politics,—I look for a Theban father in the sacred band. The regulation of poor-houses, Sir, should be a primary object,—industry is the parent of virtue : a restriction to the native parish under certain limitations and provisions is well worth consideration, as likewise new parochial laws concerning the time and circumstances that should constitute a settlement. — No marriage should be solemnized but in the parish church of one of the parties, extra-licences being rated at too high a price for the commonalty ; to balance this in favour of population, something like the *jus trium liberorum* might be allowed, and emoluments to industrious families might arise from the savings made in the poor's rates, or from other funds ; religion, neglected religion

religion under political patronage might effect much;—to shut up the receptacles of mean debauchery—*et sacras referare domos*, were a labour by no means unworthy of us:—The militia, formed wholly of this rank of people, is a great source of their corruption, which I would purify and amend;—the life of a foldier, Sir, is but too prone to idleness and vice, and those who have too long habituated themselves to it, return to their parishes but to corrupt them, or more generally run wild abroad, foregoe their trades and occupations, and from having been the defenders, become the pest of the kingdom: Sir, I would new-model the militia;—the time of service should be limited to two years, and no man should be permitted to re-enter till after a two years interval from service: the whole body of militia colonels will reprobate, or deride this innovation; a commanding officer is proud of his parade, and any scheme which might seem to have a tendency to the making it less exact and adroit will be scouted by these mi-
E litary

litary spirits: six weeks or two months is the common time that the militia regiments allot to their drill, and for the useful parts even a shorter time would suffice; these objections then are removed, and particularly so if the ballot for militia men was, throughout England and Wales, returned and filled up in the month of December; half of each regiment might be discharged at the close of the summer's campaign, and as soon as the vacancies were filled up, the other half should have three months furlough, not as mere matter of indulgence, but to prevent their losing sight of their cottage life, of their families, of a permanent seat of their affections and industry: advantages, Sir, would thence accrue to the country not only in the line of agriculture, trade, population, and (what is of more consequence than all) in the reform of manners, but even in that of military defence; for not only a draft of thirty thousand men, but the whole body of British youth would be disciplined and ready to answer to the call of their country.—

Further consequences lurk behind—I will not rend the veil.—I pretended not alone to be able to cleanse the Augean stable,—others will pursue these crude hints, and strike out other modes of regulation which may tend to the increase, chastity of morals, and simple piety of our peasantry. *Then* shall these wide forests, these deserted tracts which were the just appanage of ancient royalty, at an æra when the chace was deemed an education for chivalry and warfare,—*then* shall these wastes be wisely and justly demanded from the crown, to employ the overflowings of the crowded and industrious villages: *Now*, the surrender of such lands to the community, in its dearth of inhabitants and frugal industry, would be merely to whet the appetite of some farming projector, from whose ruin they would date a scattered and ever-lin-
 gering cultivation: *Then* would a numerous and working people convert the dreary heath to the garden of husbandry, and Old England glory in its accession of wealth and of people.—*Then* shall the ho-

nourable gentleman have due credit for his abilities displayed this day.—*Then* shall he reap his full reward,—when at a future, and distant period, the house shall revert to their parliamentary record, which shall dignify the patriotic memory of the father, whilst his only and promising son shall with hereditary eloquence move—that so much land be portioned to so many hundred families,—that such encouragement be given,—that such immunities be allowed. Sir, I will not at this time any longer trespass on the patience of the house. I should have much to say to the middling classes; much to the higher ranks of men; but already I have said enough to give some insight into the plan which my mind suggests not only as feasible, but as of most promising aspect:—Enough too I have said to show wherefore I disapprove the plan now laid before you by the honourable gentleman;—to show in what I think it too violent and active, and in what deficient. Sir, I shall reserve any further explanation to a future day, when I hope for
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the indulgence and assistance of this house; of no one, more than of the honourable gentleman; I revere his abilities, I honour his integrity, I am charmed with his eloquence,—but I assuredly shall give a negative to the avowed principle of his plan,—a negative therefore to the bringing in of his bills.

Ere I set down, let me exhort the house to reflect on what line of demeanour is most conducive to its dignity and importance at this momentous period,—what duties it owes to the commonweal,—what is the true measure of honourable and just policy which the interests of our country require of us at this awful crisis: full sure, Sir, I am, that it is not to open our ears to the seductive voice of popularity,—full sure I am, that it is not to give way to menaces, or to be biaſſed in our deliberative capacity by the complaints of the ignorant, or discontents of the factious. The storm is raging, and the affrighted owner bids the pilot make to the land,—shall he obey, and
yield

yield his bark to the shoals and to the furge?—No, Sir, he turns the prow to the open seas, and when the hurricane is weathered, he shall have the thanks of his masters;—nor shall conscience fail to requite him. We undoubtedly do belong to the people, we are their heads to think, we are their voices to utter,—and to the hour of our political dissolution, they have no other organs of *public* deliberation and vote:—what they have given up, they have no right to resume, and therefore it is, that parliament is not perennial;—by implication, that sacred, that holy deposit which law and the constitution surrender back to the people at a stated period, cannot at any other period be demanded by them with right; nor can it be yielded up by us without shame to ourselves, without wrong to them, without wrong to the triple legislature of the state. They have indeed entrusted us with a weighty trust;—we betray that trust, we betray them, if we listen or yield to ought but what our solemn and fairly debated

debated counsels establish by weight of law and reason ; and warrant, and call upon us to do. These humble petitions we are bound to hear, but not implicitly to adopt the prayer : for my own part, I thank my constituents for their confidence in me, but should think I little deserved it, had I not that honest regard and manly friendship for them, which, as it would cherish their rightful pretensions, would as freely reject their wayward humours, and self-injurious requisitions.

—Well, Charles, what say you ?

Mr. F—. Ha, ha, ha,—Say ! why that in your heat you twenty times forgot on which side of the house you was speaking,—you veered round every point of the compass,—hugg'd the treasury, embraced opposition, and kick'd both ;—then giving way to the fertility of genius, whilst you opposed one thing, you must propose another.—

Mr.

Mr. *B*——. But yet I was not so desultory, but that you might observe some good arguments against the principle of the bill; it is to that I would have you speak.

Mr. *F*——. My head aches so confoundedly with setting up last night, that I am in no humour to play the orator;—but my opinion in mere conversation you are welcome to: in the first place, I do, and ever did think, that the ministry would not let the principle of the bill pass unheeded,—but they will not attack it in the mode you suppose, or indeed in any other mode; but more probably will point-blank have the impudence to assert, that there is no undue influence at all.—Should any one artfully, or from a speculative turn use the mode of reasoning you held forth,—it will afford us a large field for irony, invective, and argument;—the ridicule passed on Brown's estimation of the times is not out of date,—or perhaps I would seize our antagonist's arms, and
beat

beat him with his own weapons, by talking more loudly for a reform of morals, as a natural consequence of subverting the means of corruption in the crown;—by evincing that such reform must of necessity begin with parliament—(as in sound reasoning and sense indeed it should) that otherwise the absurdity must follow, which your paradoxical ingenuity has led you into, of making those allowedly the worst, the reformers of those allowedly the better.—The reformers should first be reformed.—I will turn all you have said to-day to good account on a future occasion,—when I am to urge the vices and general depravity which have followed the corruption of the legislature, and show the necessity of reform there—you have suggested to me new grounds for supporting your bill, and beating down the arguments for influence.

Mr. B——. You are right indeed, I am satisfied that there is no danger of your wanting argument or words:—but for your

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head-ach, Sir, it is nervous,—there is intimate connection between those quick and delicate fibres which embrace the coats of the stomach, and their nicer involutions which form the glandular substance of the brain—I would recommend something to eat.

Mr. F—. Ring the bell, we will have a broiled fowl and a bottle of claret.

Mr. B——. Port, Sir, is a better digestive, and a greater bracer.——

The conversation now became desultory and common-place : Mr. F— praised Beconsfield mutton ;—Mr. B—— talked of a brood mare given him by Mr. C——y, and described all her points with an accuracy of terms which would have done credit to a horse-dealer ; — Mr. F— gave a detail of loss and winnings at the club ;—and Mr. B—— said, he had stopt at an alehouse in his way to town, to make water,—and, “ Sir, I learnt something at
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the stable door;—I vow to God, I did not know that a goat chewed the cud before.”—Expecting now to hear nothing further of consequence, and as my private marks in brachygraphy sometimes puzzle me, if I do not soon commit them to plain writing, —I rang the bell, paid for my punch, and went immediately home to copy fairly out the above speech and conversation; and I do now put the identity and authenticity of the same out of all doubt, by signing my name——

LOVEL TOMLINSON.

1853
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